

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 146480
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05
SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 ARA-10 HA-05 IO-13 /083 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:TPDOUBLEDAY:LAR
APPROVED BY AF:RMMOOSE
AF/C:LDJUNIOR
INR/RAF:JSEASWORD
EUR/WE:MLISSFELT
P:JCARSON
S/S:FGWISNER
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O 090103Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 146480

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AO, FR

SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF SITUATION IN ANGOLA

REF: PARIS 18077

FOLLOWING IS ASSESSMENT OF ANGOLAN SITUATION, PREPARED BY
AF AND CONCURRED IN BY INR, FOR YOU TO SHARE WITH
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SUMMARY: NETO REMAINS THE TOP FIGURE IN THE MPLA-LABOR
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CONFIDENTIAL

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APPROVED BY: ARA/CCA:ADBOWEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 146480

FOL RPT STATE 146480 SENT ACTION PARIS DTD 09 JUN 8

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 146480

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 146480 ACTION HAVANA DATED JUNE 9, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 146480

FOL RPT STATE 146480 SENT ACTION PARIS DTD 09 JUN 8

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POTENTIALLY SERIOUS ISSUE CONCERNS THE ECONOMY: ALTHOUGH FROM MOST ACCOUNTS FOOD IS NOT AS SCARCE AS IT WAS IN EARLY 1977, THERE CONTINUE TO BE SERIOUS SHORTAGES, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS, AND MANY CONSUMER ITEMS ARE REPORTEDLY NOT AVAILABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, BUT ONLY TO THOSE IN PROMINENT POSITIONS.

4. POSSIBLY THE MOST LIKELY LEADER OF A CHALLENGE TO PRESIDENT NETO CENTERED AROUND THE MORE RADICAL BLACKS, WOULD BE ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF JOAO LUIS NETO (AKA XIETU, AND NO RELATION TO PRESIDENT NETO); WHO IS YOUNG, RELATIVELY UNEDUCATED, WITH A STRICTLY MILITARY BACKGROUND. WHAT JOAO LUIS NETO'S LONG-RANGE PLANS MIGHT BE ARE NOT KNOWN, BUT HE OR OTHER POTENTIAL YOUNG BLACK LEADERS ARE IN AN INCREASINGLY STRONG POSITION TO MOUNT A FUTURE CHALLENGE TO THE PRESIDENT, GIVEN THE POWER SHIFT WITHIN THE MPLA AT THE DECEMBER CONGRESS. THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST THAT THE YOUNG BLACKS IN THE MILITARY WOULD BE THE SOLE ELEMENT IN POTENTIAL OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT NETO. THEY WOULD

LIKELY BE JOINED BY YOUNG BLACK CIVILIANS IN THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE. ANOTHER CENTER OF POWER WHICH MIGHT ALLY ITSELF WITH JOAO LUIS NETO IF THE LATTER CHOSE TO CHALLENGE PRESIDENT NETO IS THE SECRET POLICE (KNOWN AS DISA), WHOSE MULATTO DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR HAVE BECOME PROMINENT IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. FOR THE PRESENT, THOUGH, PRESIDENT NETO REMAINS ON TOP, AND WE HAVE NO CONFIDENTIAL

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REASON TO BELIEVE THAT AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO OVERTHROW HIM IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

B. NETO'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS SOVIETS AND CUBANS

5. THE HEAVY CUBAN AND SOVIET PRESENCE, WHILE PROVIDING AID TO THE NETO REGIME IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS, HAS AT THE SAME TIME THE EFFECT OF LIMITING NETO'S POWER. CUBANS IN PARTICULAR ARE SO NUMEROUS IN LUANDA THAT SOME MINISTRIES, ONCE ONE GETS BELOW THE LEVEL OF DEPUTY MINISTER OR PERMANENT SECRETARY, ARE SAID TO BE COMPRISED ALMOST ENTIRELY OF CUBANS. THIS IS REPORTED TO BE THE CASE AT THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND PUBLIC WORKS, FOR EXAMPLE. THE NATIONAL BANK IS SAID TO BE HEAVILY STAFFED BY SOVIETS. DISA IS REPORTEDLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE EAST GERMANS AND POSSIBLY THE CUBANS. THERE ARE INCREASING REPORTS THAT THIS FOREIGN PRESENCE IS GREATLY RESTRICTING NETO'S FREEDOM OF ACTION, THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, INFORMATION IS KEPT FROM HIM AND SOME OF HIS DECISIONS ARE IN PRACTICE NULLIFIED -- WHETHER BY HIS SUBORDINATES ACTING ON THEIR OWN OR AT SOVIET/CUBAN INSTIGATION, OR BY SOVIETS AND CUBANS DIRECTLY. BEYOND MERE INTERFERENCE WITH NETO'S DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONS, THIS SITUATION

COULD WELL HAVE THE EFFECT OF ENCOURAGING POSSIBLE CHALLENGERS TO NETO -- E.G., IN DISA.

6. THE SOVIETS WERE WIDELY REPORTED TO HAVE HAD AT LEAST SOME INVOLVEMENT WITH THE UNSUCCESSFUL COUP PLOT OF MAY 1977; NETO, IN ANY CASE, BELIEVED THIS. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THEY WOULD GIVE SUPPORT TO A POSSIBLE CHALLENGER TO NETO, SUCH AS JOAO LUIS NETO, WHOM THEY MIGHT CONSIDER MORE PLIABLE. HOWEVER, HIS CONVICTION THAT THE SOVIETS ALREADY TRIED ONCE TO DO HIM IN UNDOUBTEDLY MAKES CONFIDENTIAL

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NETO WARY OF APPEARING TO THE SOVIETS TO BE TOO INDEPENDENT.

C. THE INSURGENCY

7. THE NETO GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE FACED WITH THREE INSURGENCIES. WITH CUBAN MILITARY HELP, IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEAL WITH TWO OF THEM -- FNLA IN THE NORTHWEST AND FLEC

CABINDA. ULTHOUGH BOTH OF THESE MOVEMENTS CONTINUE TO ENJOY CONSIDERABLE POPULAR SUPPORT IN THEIR TERRITORY, MILITARILY THEY HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO A FAIRLY STEADY BUT LOW LEVEL OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN A SMALL AREA OF THE COUNTRY. UNITA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS MADE A STRIKING COMEBACK FROM ITS DEFEAT IN CONVENTIONAL WAR IN EARLY 1976, AND TODAY IS ACTIVE THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE SOUTHERN HALF OF ANGOLA, FROM THE AREA AROUND HUAMBO AND BIE (FORMERLY NOVA LISBOA AND SILVA PORTO) WHERE MUCH OF THE PRO-UNITA POPULATION IS LOCATED, TO THE SPARSELY POPULATED SOUTHEAST WHERE UNITA MAINTAINS A NUMBER OF BASES. THE LUANDA AUTHORITIES MAINTAIN UNDISPUTED CONTROL OF THE CITIES IN THIS REGION, AS WELL AS OF THE COASTLINE; HOWEVER, UNITA GUERRILLAS OPERATE AT WILL THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE COUNTRY-SIDE. THEY FREQUENTLY INTERDICT THE BENGUELA RAILROAD AND AMBUSH GOVERNMENT AND CUBAN CONVOYS. TO DATE THE INCREASINGLY HEAVY OPERATIONS MOUNTED AGAINST UNITA BY ANGOLAN AND CUBAN FORCES, WHILE CAUSING SOME CASUALTIES, HAVE SUCCEEDED PRIMARILY IN CHASING UNITA AROUND IN THE BUSH BUT NOT IN CAUSING SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE. THE MAJOR ASPECT OF THE FIGHTING IN WHICH UNITA IS AT A SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE IS THE AIR, WHICH IS DOMINATED BY THE CUBANS.

8. THE NETO REGIME HAS THUS NOT SUCCEEDED IN THROWING UNITA ONTO THE DEFENSIVE. BARRING AN UNEXPECTED MAJOR DEFEAT BY CUBAN FIREPOWER, UNITA CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO PRESS FORWARD AGAINST THE MPLA AND THE CUBANS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND IN PARTICULAR TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO EXTEND ITS ACTIVITY FARTHER TO THE NORTH. ANY DRASTIC GAIN FOR UNITA IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, SINCE, AS UNITA MOVES FARTHER NORTHWARD, IT WILL BE LEAVING ITS OWN TRADITIONAL AREA OF ETHNIC SUPPORT AND ENTERING THAT OF THE MPLA.

9. THE ONE EVENT WHICH COULD SPUR A SUDDEN, RATHER THAN A CONTINUED GRADUAL,IMPROVEMENT IN UNITA FORTUNES WOULD BE AN OUTBREAK OF INTERNAL CONFLICT WITHIN THE MPLA. SUCH CONFLICT COULD BE SET OFF EITHER BY THE DEATH OF NETO, RESULTING IN A POWER STRUGGLE (QUITE POSSIBLY PROTRACTED) FOR THE SUCCESSION, OR BY AN ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW NETO, WHICH, AS INDICATED ABOVE, WE DO NOT CONSIDER LIKELY AT PRESENT. UNITA IN THAT CASE MIGHT WELL BE ABLE TO BUILD UP ENOUGH MOMENTUM TO MOVE DEEP INTO THE MPLA'S HEARTLAND. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT UNITA WOULD BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY OCCUPY AND ADMINISTER THAT AREA, GIVEN THAT AREA'S TRADITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE MPLA, AND GIVEN UNITA'S LACK OF SUFFICIENT TRAINED CADRES.

10. THE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION OF ALL THIS IS THAT THE

ANGOLAN CONFLICT WILL NOT BE SETTLED BY A CLEAR MILITARY VICTORY BY ONE SIDE; THAT THERE MUST EVENTUALLY BE SOME SORT OF ACCOMMODATION. NETO HAS YET TO ACCEPT THIS THESIS; SAVIMBI HAS ACCEPTED IT ALL ALONG, ALTHOUGH HE INSISTS ON CUBAN WITHDRAWAL. RECONCILIATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN THE CARDS AT PRESENT; THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE, HOWEVER, IS CONTINUED CIVIL WAR. VANCE

UNQUOTE VANCE UNQUOTE VANCE

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